fixed like 80:20 or 60:40 and so on.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, the idea is to connect the whole country and efforts are towards that direction. Now, it is demand-cum-supply thing in both the sectors. We cannot say, 'It is all right, we will give so much for rural areas and so much for urban areas'. It depend upon where the demand is. Maybe in one of the urban areas we have very less demand and in the rural areas more demand. It is totally a serving Department, and we go with the intention of where we can serve and give connectivity for efficient communication through telephone connection.

Cotton Production

*799. SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated production of Cotton during 1991-92 season;

(b) the porposed increase in support price of unginned cotton for 1991-92 season;

(c) whether there is any scarcity of cotton in the country;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to overcome this shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Sowing of cotton crop of 1991-92 season is still in progress in some of the States. It is too early to indicate estimated production of cotton during 1991-92 season. However, rainfall and weather conditions during the current season in major cotton growing States have generally been favourable. According to the present indications, production of cotton during 1991-92 is expected to be higher by 12-16 lakh bales than the last year's production of 100 lakh bales.

(b) The Government has fixed the minimum support prices for the basic varieties of cotton namely F-414/H-777 and H-4 at Rs. 695 and Rs. 840 per quintal respectively. This shows an increase in prices over those for 1990-91 cotton season by Rs. 75 and Rs. 90 per quintal respectively.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know this from the hon. Minister. As you also come from Maharashtra, you know the answer. They are evading the answer by saying that 'it is too early to indicate estimated production of cotton during 1991-92 season.' But in the same para they are saying...

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. You don't to read the reply please. You come to the question.

SHRI M.R.KADAMBUR JANARTHANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, because there is contrast in the answer, I have to tell that. Then only I can ask the question.

MR. SEAKER: No, no. You don't have to repeat by reading.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Because there is a contrast in the answer. [*Interruptions*].

MR. SPEAKER: You are taking the time of the other Members.

[*Interruptions*]

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Sir, recently the Cotton Advisory Board just 10 days back have announced in the papers about a cotton exhibition of 130 lakh bales. But in the Agriculture Ministry they are saying, it is not there. Therefore, from this answer I come to know that there is no contact between the Cotton Advisory Board and the Agriculture Board. Therefore, keep-

ing the welfare of the cotton growers in view, I want to know from the Minister whether the Agriculture Ministry will for a Cotton Development Board comprising of cotton growers, handloom sectors and powerloom sectors and bureaucrats from Agriculture and Textile Ministries so that since that cotton is going to move within one month, in October, Agriculture Ministry will be not facing such a confusing state about the constitution of the Board which it will announce in September.

Part (b) of my Supplementary is this. The previous Ministry has given a proposal to estimate the crop through satellite methods. Is this Ministry aware of that and will it come forward to estimate the crop through the model satellite method? The next part of my Supplementary is...

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. Not like this. You are unconnected and all that.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: About the estimates of cotton production by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Cotton Advisory Board also prepares estimate of production which is based on the information supplied by the industry and trade.

The estimates of cotton production of the Cotton Advisory Board are usually higher than the official estimates prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture gets the information from the concerned State Government and State Governments are in fact making assessments. The officers from the Sample Survey Organisation are going to the respective States and they are making their own study and report back to the Ministry of Agriculture. So, the information given by the CAB is purely based on the information given by the industry as well as the trade. That information would mainly depend on the market arrival of the cotton.

Then, about the assessment, two or three measures are adopted by the Ministry. The old method is the method of "eye estimates' and the second method is the 'crop cutting experiment'. According to our Ministry, that is the most scientific method because that is based on statistical sampling and the third method is 'satellite imagery interpretation'. It was assured by the hon. Minister of Textiles of the previous Government on the floor of the House that he would explore the possibility of introducing that system to assess the crop. As per the latest information, this experiment had already been carried out in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The result is not satisfactory because of variations in climate. If the atmosphere is cloudy, then we do not get the real picture of the crop available in the field and if there is a mixed crop, then also the assessment will not be correct. Even in advanced countries like USA, this system is not adopted because it has not yielded good results. So, we will examine the suggestion given by the hon. Member and if possible we will introduce it throughout the country.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Sir, the Ministry has given the support price as Rs. 695/- and Rs.840/-, but the market price is between Rs. 1,200/-and Rs.1,600/-. From the cotton, oil is extracted and the fibre is used in the industry. Therefore, the farmers should know the oil content of their cotton and the microneir value of the fibre. Then only they can know the real value of their cotton and they can demand their due price in the market. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the ICAR will come forward to tell the farmers the oil percentage in the cotton seed and microneir value in the beginning of the season itself. The second part of my second supplementary is about the scarcity of cotton.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Janarthanan, You have to ask the question. You are taking too much time of the House.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Sir, after 1954, there is scarcity of cotton only this year. But he has told that there is no scarcity. Due to the indiscriminate export policy adopted by the previous Gov-

ernment, there is a great demand for cotton and the carry over position is only 15 lakh bales which is contrary to previous seasons. Due to this, there is a demand for import of cotton. Therefore, will the Ministry stop importing of cotton at this stage in the interest of the farmers? Otherwise, it will affect the farmers as the crop is going to move in the month of October.

Then, the support price is called as 'puppet price' in the market. The gap between the support price and the market price should not be very high. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will fix the support price at a reasonable level.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: The Government of India fixes the support price after getting recommendations from the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices and while deciding the price, we will take into account several factors.

One is to ensure remunerative price to the growers; second is to stabilise the market. Third is, of course, with regard to cotton export. This element is very important because without export, the farmers will be at the mercy of the unscrupulous traders. From our Ministry, we have decided to promote export to the maximum extent. But the apprehension in the mind of the hon. Member is not correct.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Are you going to import cotton or not?

SHRI MULLAPPALY RAMACHANDRAN: We are not going to import cotton because there is no scarcity in the market at all. There is no question of importing cotton this year.

About the demand and supply, I come to the supply. Including an opening stock of 30.79 lakh bales and crop of 115 lakh bales, the total availability and supply of cotton is estimated by the Cotton Advisory Board at 147.79 lakh bales. According to the information available with my Ministry, Production is around 100 lakh bales during 1990-91. During 1991-92, we expect a bumber crop of all-time record. Therefore, the apprehension in the mind of the hon. Member is out of place. [*Interruptions*]

While fixing the support price, we never take into account the factors which have been mentioned by the hon. Member. Of course, his suggestion has been taken note of. While formulating some other policy, if there is any change in the policy, definitely his suggestion will be taken into account.

SHRI K.P. REDDAIAH YADAV: During 1990-91, we have earned Rs. 891 crores of foreign exchange by exporting cotton. For the export of industrial products, you have given so many incentives. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will consider to give incetives to those who are producing export quality cotton.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: At the moment, we have no proposal to give them such things.

[*Translation*]

KUMARI UMA BHARTI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the figures of this year's cotton-production indicate that as compared to the last year, the production of cotton has decreased. Through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would look into the reasons for it end take some remedial measures?

[*English*]

SHRI MULLAPPALY RAMACHANDRAN: The official estimate of production of cotton during 1990-91 is yet to be processed. However, according to the present estimate, the production is expected to be around 100 lakh bales despite fall in production in Punjab, Haryana and parts of Rajasthan on account of major pest incidence. There is no marked decrease as such. There is no need for apprehension so far as the hon. Memeber is concerned.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: There is likely to be shortfall in the cotton production. That is what is mentioned in the annual report of your Ministry.

SHRI MULLAPPALY RAMACHANDRAN: There is very slight fall in the production. But it will not affect the market; it will no affect the farmers also.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, will the hon. Minister be pleased to tell whether it is a fact that the demand for cotton-clothes has again increased inside and outside India during the last five years and, as a result thereof, area under cotton cultivation which had decreased following a slump in demand for cotton and cotton-clothes has again gone up? May I know the measures being taken by the Government to encourage cotton cultivation and increase area under cotton cultivation?

[*English*]

SHRI MULLAPPALY RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, under the Intensive Cotton Cultivation Programme, there are so many incentives being given by the Ministry. Of course, the farmers are being benefited by this programme.

Under the Intensive Cotton Development Scheme (ICDS), the Government provides plant protection equipment and chemicals at subsidised rate to the farmers.

DR. (SHRIMATI) K.S.SOUNDARAM: The extra long staple cotton which is named Suvin cottion is grown only in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. May I know from the Minister whether the C.C.I. Will come forward to buy this cotton to export to foreign countries, which is in great demand.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many bales of this variety the Government of India exported last year.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: We are not concerned with the Cotton Corporation of India. It is under the Ministry of Textiles. It is the look out of that Ministry.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QESTIONS

[*English*]

Local Call Facility in Delhi

**801. DR. C. SILVERA : Will the Minister* of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to *state:*

(a). whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd., Delhi has provided free local call facility at some places in Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that the facility is not misused:

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI. RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b). Yes Sir. Free local call telephone facility has been provided in emergency/ casualty wards of main hospitals, arrival/departure lounges of Indira Gandhi International Airport and Telecom Centre at Shastri Bhawan.

(c). These telephones are installed at a carefully chosen place to ensure that the facility extended is not misused.

Conversion of Manual Telephone Exchanges into Electronic Exchanges.

*802. SHRI. DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state: